

Amabilis of Riom

(c. 398 - 475)

BRIEFING

Amable of Riom or **Saint Amable** was a priest of Riom , in Auvergne , in the 5th century (in Latin *Amabilis vici Ricomagensis presbyter* , from the word *amabilis* : worthy of love, amiable). He is celebrated locally on June 11 , on October 18 in the West, and on July 3 in the East.

His reliquary is now in Riom in the basilica of the same name: Saint-Amable .

HISTORY AND TRADITION

Popular culture indicates that Amable was born in Villossanges, in the Combrailles, a place where a cross can still be found today marking the place of his birth.

Amable exercised his ministry at the episcopal seat of Auvergne (in Clermont) under the guidance of Saint Sidonius Apollinaris, before becoming the priest of the church of Riom.

He is presented as *precentor*: that is to say, either as an ecclesiastical dignitary or as an administrative or ceremonial agent. At the very least, he became the first cantor. At that time, the cantor did not simply sing during the celebration. He recruited and trained the choir, directed its rehearsals and oversaw its official functions, interpreted the rubrics, and explained the ceremonies. He generally ordered the divine office and sometimes composed hymns , sequences, or even hagiographies. It is said that at his voice, venomous beasts and demons fled. Images and medals depicting the saint still bear this inscription: "The demon flees, as do the serpent and the fire." In Mirecourt, one can see a 17TH - century painting depicting Saint Amable, a saint reputed to protect against serpents and sorcerers. He died on November 11 of the year 475. His feast day is, however, celebrated on June 11th and October 18th in the West, and on July 3rd in the East. He is celebrated in Riom during two solemn festivals marking the veneration of Saint Amable: the Sunday following the October 19 (Saint Amable of winter) and the Sunday following the June 11 (Saint Amable of summer). During this great summer festival, the reliquary containing the relics of the Saint, as well as a wheel of flowers made by the inhabitants, is carried in procession through the streets of the city.

His tomb in Clermont was the site of several miracles, witnessed by Saint Gregory of Tours and recounted in his **In Gloria confessorum**, § 32. Many people also came to pray to him to ward off bad luck and protect themselves from the demonic spirit (resulting in rage, convulsions, and delirium). Around 640, Bishop Gal II of Clermont decided to transfer his body to Riom, where it was placed in the church of Saint-Bénigne, which later became the church of Saint-Amable.

Father Antoine Déat introduced his cult to Canada, where he was venerated for a very long time. In the 1730s, one in ten children was named Amable. A chapel had been built in his honor at Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal.

Even today, some inhabitants of the Riom region bear the first name Amable. It is customary to ring the Saint Amable bell for major life events (baptism, wedding, funeral). This bell in the basilica is normally only used during the celebration of the saint's feast day.